

Notable Places

■ Wharton Studios

From about 1914 to 1920 the film studio operated in today's Stewart Park. Brothers Theodore and Leopold Wharton produced silent film serials and short features in Ithaca including *The Mysteries of Myra* (1916) and *Patria* (1917). Financial troubles ended the Wharton operation in 1920.

■ Clinton House



116 N. Cayuga St. Opened in 1830, the Greek Revival-style hotel reflected Ithaca's early prosperity. It was remodeled twice, first in 1872 altering the appearance of the upper floors and again following a 1901 fire. Plans in 1973 to demolish the building prompted a successful community effort resulting in an active preservation movement. Today, offices and the New Roots Charter School are located in the building.

■ DeWitt Park

Buffalo and Cayuga Streets. The park is the core of an historic district of 45 buildings included in 1971 on the National Register of Historic Places. The park was known as Town Square until 1867 and was named for Simeon DeWitt who developed the land that became the Village (1821) and then City (1888) of Ithaca.

Cemeteries

■ **Ithaca City Cemetery** - access from University Avenue. Burials began about 1790 in this 16-acre cemetery.

■ **Mount Olivet Cemetery** - East State Street. Originally named Immaculate Conception Cemetery. Active 1860-1940s.

More information on Tompkins County cemeteries:
www.nytopmki.org/tcem.htm

Census

Ithaca has been the population center of the county since it became a village in 1821. It had 611 residents in 1818. Five years later in 1823, its population boomed to 1,268 residents.

City of Ithaca	Tompkins County
1840: 5,650*	32,296
1920: 17,004	35,285
1960: 28,732	66,097
2010: 30,014	101,624

* The 1840 population total includes both the Village and the Town of Ithaca, even though they were separate municipalities. After Ithaca became a city in 1888, its population was recorded separately from the town's residents.

Residents of Note

■ Elizabeth Beebe (1830s-1905)

was appointed the city missionary in 1890. She cared for the community's poor and orphans until her death. Her work was supported by the Ladies Union Benevolent Society. Beebe lived in the Children's Home on West Seneca Street, and ran the Inlet Mission, later called the Beebe Chapel, which provided both religious services and education for women and children.



■ Juanita Breckenridge Bates (1860-1946)

came to Tompkins County to become minister of the Brookton Congregational Church. She married the Caroline Town Supervisor, and led the suffrage effort in Ithaca. She held positions in the New York State Suffrage Association.

■ James L. Gibbs (1905-1981)

in 1937 became the first director of the Southside Community Center, an outgrowth of the Frances W. Harper Club, a woman's organization that promoted entertainment and education for residents of the area, and the Servus League. In 1987 a street where the Ithaca Youth Bureau is located near Stewart Park was named to honor Gibbs.



■ Martha Van Rensselaer (1864-1932)

came to Cornell University in 1900 to organize a reading course for farmers' wives. She and Flora Rose became founding co-directors of the College of Home Economics, the predecessor of the New York State College of Human Ecology.



■ Edward J. Conley (1933-2009)

served as city alderman from 1968, he was elected mayor in 1971 and served until 1979. He proposed converting parts of State and Tioga streets into a pedestrian mall to counter years of Ithaca's downtown decline. He overcame many concerns about the Commons plan and construction began in 1974. He served on the Tompkins County Board of Representatives from 1980-1981 and the Town of Ithaca Board from 1994-2001. In 2006, Conley Park near the Sciencenter was named in his honor.

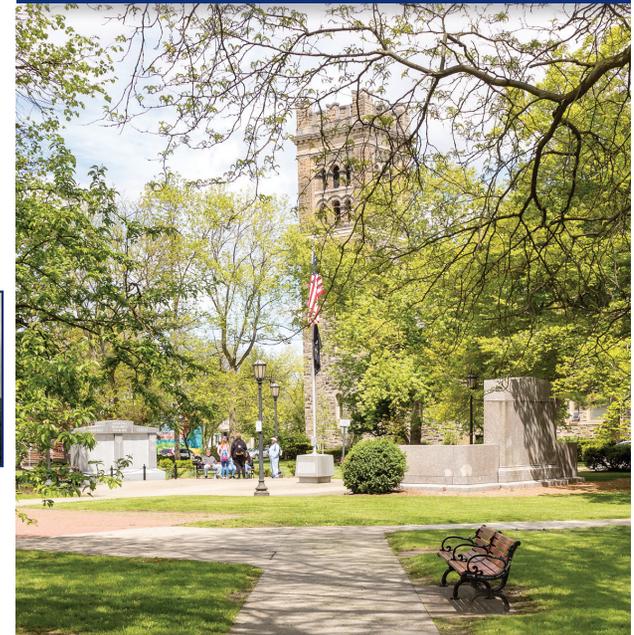
For more local history:

- <http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/historian>
- <http://www.thehistorycenter.net>

Text by Mary Tomlan, City of Ithaca Historian, Carol Kammen, Tompkins County Historian. Design/production: Allison Kaiser. Cover photo: Adam Baker. Editing: Bruce Estes, Carol Kammen. The Tompkins County Bicentennial Commission sponsored city and town history brochures to commemorate the county's 200th anniversary in 2017.



City of Ithaca



Ithaca was established by New York Surveyor General Simeon DeWitt who owned the land at the head of Cayuga Lake. In 1817, when the state of New York created Tompkins County, Ithaca was named the county seat and in 1821 formed its village government. Water power and railroads contributed to its growing population and economy. In 1864 Ezra Cornell funded a public library for the village and in 1865 he sited the state's Morrill Land Grant university in Ithaca. W. Grant Egbert founded the Ithaca Conservatory in 1892 that grew into Ithaca College in 1931. Ithaca suffered several devastating fires and a major flood in 1935 that led to flood control improvements in the 1950s. State Street was turned into a pedestrian mall in the 1970s.



City of Ithaca Points of Interest



Photo courtesy Cornell University Photography

■ Cornell University

Established 1865 by Andrew Dickson White and Ezra Cornell and opened in 1868. Cornell was among the first universities in the United States to admit women and African Americans. Today, Cornell has about 21,000 students and has campuses in Geneva, N.Y., New York City, Qatar, and partnerships with countries, major universities and research groups around the world.

■ Cayuga Waterfront Trail

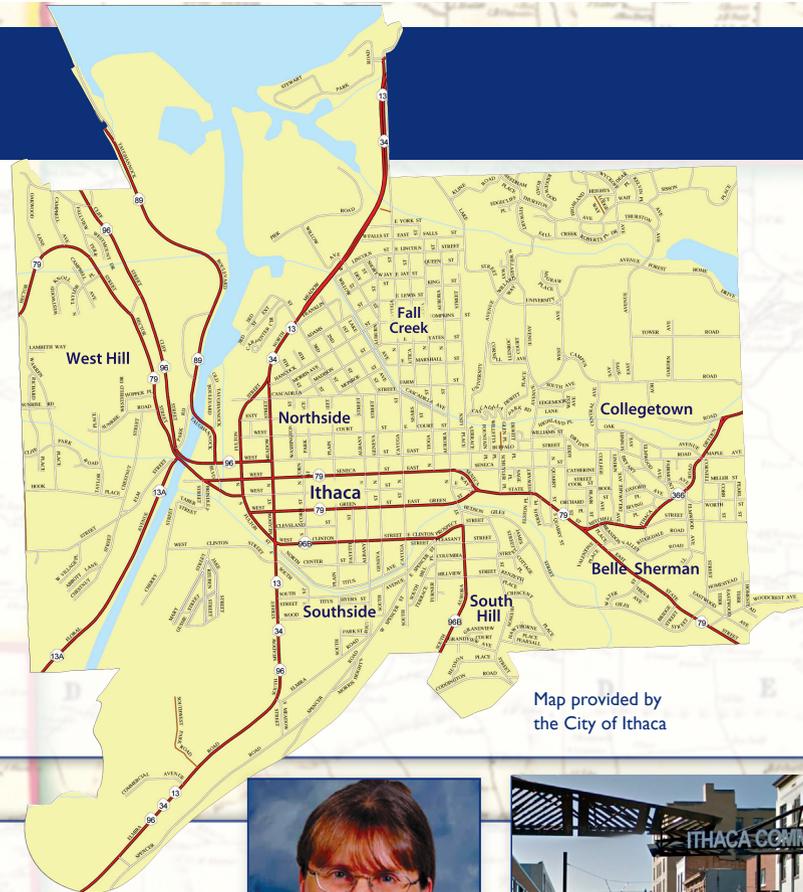
The six-mile-long trail along Cayuga Lake was completed in 2015, linking the Chamber of Commerce Visitors Center, Stewart Park, Newman Golf Course, Ithaca Farmers' Market, Ithaca College and Cornell University boathouses, Cass Park, and Treman Marina.

■ Sagan Planet Walk

The walkable scale model of the solar system consists of 11 obelisks situated along a three-quarter mile route through Ithaca that ends with at the Ithaca Sciencenter, 601 First Street. In 2012 the route was extended to Hawaii to represent the sun's closest neighboring star. The exhibit honors the memory of Ithaca resident and Cornell Professor Carl Sagan.

■ Ithaca Farmers' Market

The market opened in 1973 as a venue for local growers, craftspeople and food. The market moved several times before settling at Steamboat Landing, 545 Third St.



Map provided by the City of Ithaca



1798

Simeon DeWitt arrived in area that he would name Ithaca in 1804.

1864 Ezra Cornell endowed the Cornell Library that became Tompkins County Public Library.

1871 A fire started on Aurora St. and spread quickly to destroy downtown homes and commercial buildings.

1888 New York designated Ithaca a city.



1892

Ithaca Conservatory of Music, later Ithaca College, founded.

A July storm dropped eight inches of rain on Tompkins County, flooding Ithaca and nearby communities. Areas along Rte. 13 in the city were under about three feet of water.

1935



1956

42 suburban and rural school districts consolidated into the Ithaca City School District.

1968 Ithaca College moved from downtown to its present location on South Hill.



2003

Carolyn Peterson became the first woman elected Ithaca mayor. She served two terms, 2004-2011.

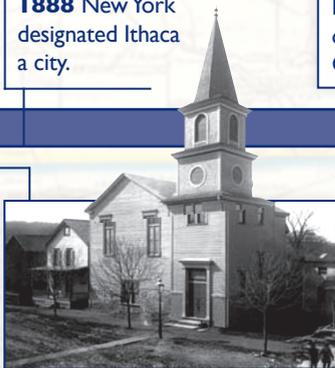


2013

Ithaca Commons renovation began in April. The commercial district re-opened in August 2015, giving the pedestrian space a fresh look.

1817 New York named Ithaca the county seat when it formed Tompkins County.

1821 Ithaca incorporated as a village.



1833

First called the African Church, St. James A.M.E. Zion Church founded on Wheat Street, now 116 Cleveland Ave.

1903 Typhoid fever outbreak linked to city's private water system resulted in about 80 deaths.

1921 City purchased Renwick Park and renamed it in honor of Mayor Edwin C. Stewart who died in office and left \$150,000 for the park's development.

1938

Southside Community Center opened on Plain Street with First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt at its dedication.



1969 African-American students at Cornell University began a 36-hour armed occupation on Willard Straight Hall April 19 to protest racial issues on campus.

1974 Ithaca Commons construction begun.

American Goldfinch is a frequently sighted in Ithaca. Photo by Priscilla Morris/ Cornell Lab of Ornithology



2011



Svante Myrick won election at age 24 to become the city's youngest and first African-American mayor. He was re-elected in 2015.